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**Jeffersonian Republican.**

**SPEECH OF THE**

**HON. ANDREW STEWART,**

**Upon the Presidential Canvass.**

Delivered in the House of Representatives, June 26th, 1848.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the bill making appropriations for the civil and diplomatic service, and Mr. Featherston having addressed the committee, (as already published)—

Mr. STEWART, in rising, said he did not propose to answer the remarks just made by the gentleman from Mississippi, (Mr. Featherston), upon the subject of slavery—a subject on which he never had made, and perhaps never would make a speech on this floor. It was an evil, and an evil without a remedy, in that portion of the country where it existed; but it was an evil which he was opposed extending to any country or territory now free. He thought the discussion of this question had the tendency to give rise to "geographical lines," which would divide the great parties of the country, and might in the end subvert our happy Union.—He regretted the drawing of such lines; he thought them dangerous to the harmony and perhaps the integrity of this great confederacy. They were divisions against which we were warned by that great and good man, the Father of his Country, in his farewell address to the people of the United States; whose voice he could never bear with indifference, and to which he trusted the people of this country would never turn a deaf ear.

There had, however, been introduced into the present discussion another great question—the Presidential question; a question which he regarded at this time as more important than any question of the kind which had ever been presented to the decision of the American people, involving momentous consequences to the welfare of the country, present and prospective. It involved this question, among others:—Whether, under the Government as it was now administered, all power was to be concentrated in the hands of one man, or whether, under other auspices, under the administration of another illustrious man, whose name was before the country, we were to be brought back to the purer and better principles and policy of the fathers of the republic! It was a question whether all power—the power of the purse and sword, the power of peace and war, was to be exercised by the President; whether with the veto power in his hand, he was to become supreme in this country, more arbitrary and despotic than any crowned head in Europe, save Nicholas of Russia, and Congress and the people were to dwindle into perfect insignificance; or whether, under the policy of that other great and good man, Gen. Taylor, the people and Congress were to be restored to their legitimate powers, just rights and proper influence; whether the voice of the people was to be heard, and they to be treated with respect, or whether we were to be controlled and governed by "one man?" Was it to be tolerated that, when across the waters, in Europe, the old world was engaged in putting down the "one-man power," we were to be putting it up here, by giving all power to the Executive; and that, whilst Europe was engaged in building up and establishing republics, we were to be employed in tearing down our neighboring republics of the South? He trusted that we should take a different course; that, under the auspices of that illustrious man whom the Whig party had presented to the country, we should give an example to the world not of war and of conquest, but of peace—of a people united, prosperous, peaceful, happy. That was the example we owed to the world, and that was the example which we would soon set to the world, under a different Administration from this. But going on, as we now were, under the lead of the "one-man power" party, we must soon become a warlike people, going on conquering and to conquer. Not only Yucatan and Cuba, but Canada, too, and all other territory we should happen to fix our avaricious eye upon, must be conquered and "swallowed" under that great chieftain whom the Progressive Democracy had selected as their leader.

Was this the policy which was to be sustained by the people? No, never! A different result was approaching; the misnamed Democracy had selected a leader, and so had the Whigs; the former a general that always surrenders, the latter a general that never surrenders. Under such leaders could the result be doubted? No, it was certain: the contest had in fact, been given up. The Union, the organ of the Administration, Father Ritchie himself had given it up. What did the Union tell us? It headed a recent article with "Will the people endure the cheat?" He went on through half a column, telling how they were cheated by the Whigs; and in other columns it was cheated, cheated, cheated! Now he would like to know what man or party ever cried "cheated" that was not beaten? "Cheated" meant "beat." In 1840, when the Whigs beat the Locos, they cried out "cheated;" in 1844, when the Locos beat, that was the cry of the Whigs; and so when the Union cried "cheated," it admitted they were beaten. "Cheated" was the language of the loser, never of the winner.

Mr. Hammons wished to propound a question to the gentleman, but—

Mr. Stewart declined to yield for want of time. He proceeded to read from one of the articles referred to in the Union in which it was said that it was unfair for the Whigs to take Taylor. If they had taken Clay, Webster, Scott, McLean, or any other known Whig, he would have been satisfied; but they had selected Old Zack, a "no-party man," and they (the Democracy) could not keep their men in the ranks; that they would not stand fire; that like the Mexicans they were not only retreating, but going over to Taylor, in companies and regiments; that they had not only Barnburners in the North, but Barnburners in the South: the Van Buren men and the Yancey men, the "Alabama platform men" and the "New York platform men;" North, South, East, and West their men were "bolting," bolting, bolting. Now this, Mr. Ritchie said, was not fair; it was a palpable cheat; the Whigs ought to have nominated Mr. Clay—a man they had often defeated, and could, he supposed, defeat again. This would have been fair; but to take up "Old Zack," a "no-party man," the very man who had fought their battles and saved their Administration from infamy and disgrace, how could the Whigs vote for him? Democrats could do so with propriety. Yes, (said Mr. S.) and that is exactly what they are going to do. Democrats would vote for him, because he was an honest, true, patriotic, faithful old man, who had risked his life in fighting the battles of the country. The honest, unsophisticated people, not the politicians, but the patriotic people of the country, felt and said, "We owe Old Zack a debt of gratitude, and we are not like Mr. Polk, Gen. Cass, and the party in the House, who pay him with kicks and cuffs; we are honest men; we will pay our honest debts; we have no money, but we will pay him in paper; we have a little bit of a ticket which we will deposit at the polls for him in November next. We don't care what you say Mr. Ritchie, or what you politicians say to the contrary; he has served his country long and faithfully; and we are going to thank him, and that, too, without Mr. Cass's disgraceful proviso attached to his vote of thanks for his glorious victory at Monterey." You might as well attempt to stop the Mississippi river as to stop these honest men from voting for Gen. Taylor.

But prudence is the better part of valor.—Mr. Ritchie is not going to wait to be shot; he starts in time. He knows Old Zack and Capt. Bragg are sharpshooters, and he no doubt feels a little like Crockett's coon, who from the top of a tree seeing a well-known marksman raising his unerring rifle, said: "Is that you Capt. Scott? If it is, don't shoot; I'll come down." So said Mr. Ritchie: "Is that you, Old Zack! If it is, don't shoot; I'll come down." [Much laughter.]

But, to make bad worse, the next day after this candid confession and surrender, out comes his old friend Van Buren against Mr. Cass.—Horrible—"et tu Brute!" This rendered the old gentleman quite frantic, and in his next paper we may expect to see him address Mr. Polk in the language of a certain celebrated song, lately applied to a distinguished Senator from New York:

"O, carry me back to Old Virginny,  
To Old Virginny's shore,"

and I never, never will come back to this place any more! (Laughter.) That was the kind of music that he expected soon to hear on the organ, now so villainously out of tune. But enough of this.

Sir, we have been repeatedly told, during this debate, that the Democrats, in their Convention at Baltimore, had laid down a platform, and they complained that the Whigs had adopted no platform whatever. But he would tell gentlemen the Whigs had a platform, and they had it in General Taylor's Allison letter, of the 22nd April; and he would proudly contrast that broad, noble, American platform, with the narrow, contracted, party platform, adopted at Baltimore. Contrast, sir, these platforms—

Ours, like its author, great and national; theirs strictly in character, a miserable party concern. How did Mr. Stevenson, the President of the Baltimore Convention, himself characterize this platform, in his letter conveying to Gen. Cass the notice of his nomination? He said:

The platform we present you is broad enough to hold all Democrats, but narrow enough to exclude all others. It was broad enough for the Loco Focos—broad enough for the party. It was a party platform, and nothing else, and so represented and so accepted by Gen. Cass, who pledged himself to carry it out. But, look at Old Zack's platform; it was broad enough for the whole country; for the whole people, and according to the principles of the Constitution, as construed and administered by the early Presidents of the Republic. The first thing they put forth in the Baltimore platform was "democracy;" they had the name, without one of the principles. Gen. Cass, and the whole of them, talk about "Jeffersonian democracy;" and, while they talked about democracy and about Thomas Jefferson—while they retained the name, they repudiated and trampled under foot every principle of Jefferson, every principle adopted and practised upon all the early Presidents—every one of them, without an exception. They preach one thing, and practice the opposite. Their democracy the Jeffersonian democracy! Why, they went for the veto power—the great conservative power of putting down the will of the people, and putting up the will of the President. This one-man power—that which, as had been well said, was intended as "the extreme medicine of the Constitution" had now become the daily bread the President feeds upon. Thomas Jefferson and his illustrious competitors never exercised the veto; he never exercised it in a single instance in the eight years of his Administration. During the first twenty years of the administration of this Government there never was a veto except in one or two unimportant cases by Gen. Washington; and vetoes, vetoes, had now become the order of the day. We were now governed by vetoes, and nothing but vetoes. At the last session, Congress passed the river and harbor bill, and sent it to the President, who, afraid to veto it, put it in his breeches pocket; but, at this session, he sent it back with his reasons against it, and this House had voted down those reasons by a vote of 138 to 54—a vote of thirty more than two-thirds! And yet it was no law; it was defeated by the will of one man. And this was the power Gen. Cass and his party advocated!

What was Gen. Taylor's position in this respect? He held, like a true republican, that with regard to questions of domestic policy it was for the people and the people's representatives to prescribe the law, and it was the duty of the President to respect their will and carry it into effect. This was the doctrine of Gen. Taylor—that it was with the people, the democratic people, to govern themselves. Yet, although Gen. Cass and his party in practice sustained and applauded this despotic power of "one man" to defeat the will of the people's representatives fairly expressed, they talked about "democracy" while they were riveting chains on the people; they talked about the beauties of economy, while they were doubling and trebling the expenses of Government; they talked loudly about the capability of the people for self-government, and Mr. Cass undertook to say that it was a great dividing line between themselves and the Whigs. That was a part of the "platform," and their profession, was directly contradicted by their practice; they practically denied the competency of the people for self-government by the arbitrary exercise of the veto power. What did this "platform" further say? That veto power had saved the people from a system of internal improvements. That it had saved the people—from what? From themselves; from carrying out their own legislation; from using their own money for their own benefit, for the improvement of their own country. They (the President and party) could take \$60,000,000 a year into Mexico; they could go all over the world and spend the money of the people, but they would suffer no part of the money to be expended under the direction of the people's representatives "for the people's benefit." They denied the power to Congress to spend the people's money for the people's benefit in the improvement of their country, but claimed and exercised the power to oppress, tax, burden the people. That

was the practical construction which this party placed upon the constitution—that the veto was to save the people from themselves; and yet in their platform they said that "the people's money ought to be carefully guarded for the people's benefit." A small mistake—they should have said "the party's benefit"—a variation merely of theory from practice; for, while they talked about guarding the people's money for the people's benefit, they were actually applying it to the benefit of themselves; and while they said that they were opposed to legislating for "the benefit of the few at the expense of the many," yet this was precisely what they were doing. They were legislating the money from the people's pockets into their own; legislating entirely for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many. Their whole system, in the very face of the eyes of their theory, was to enrich the few at the expense of the many; and this he would soon show was a game well understood by their great leader General Cass.

They talked about "economy," and preached it in their platform. They were great economists—the real Thomas Jefferson economists, while, as he had stated, they proscribed and trampled under foot every one of his principles. Thomas Jefferson was the enemy of a national debt. Look at our national debt now, created by this "Democratic" Administration. Mr. Adams administered the Government for twelve and a half millions a year, on the average of his whole term, this sum covering the entire expenses of his Administration, except what was applied to the public debt. Mr. Adams was denounced and put out for his extravagance. Mr. Van Buren came in—this lover of economy, this admirer of Thomas Jefferson—and the expenses of the Government during his Administration ran up to twenty-eight and half millions, instead of twelve and a half. Gentlemen smiled; he defied them to deny it; he challenged them to the records. They might promise to answer, as they had done before, but they would never do it never, because they could not, and the least said the better.

Mr. Thompson, of Mississippi, (Mr. S. yielding the floor with some hesitation for one question) asked if the gentleman did not now stand side by side with Mr. Van Buren?

Mr. Stewart.—What! side by side with Martin Van Buren? [A laugh.] Thank God, I have nothing to do with Martin Van Buren, and never will have. I would ask if the gentlemen himself, who was formerly so ardent a supporter of Mr. Van Buren, was for Van Buren now? Was he now his candidate? Was he for Van Buren or Cass?

Mr. Thompson's reply was not heard. Mr. Stewart continued. He said the expenses of the Government had now run up under Mr. Polk to \$60,000,000 a year. They had increased from \$12,500,000 under Mr. Adams to \$28,500,000 under Van Buren, and now to \$60,000,000 or \$60,000,000, under the present "economical" Administration!—This was their boasted Jeffersonian "economy;" this was their position to a "national debt." Why, they had done nothing but make national debts. Mr. Van Buren had found some \$40,000,000 surplus in the Treasury; he had left some \$40,000,000 of national debt, after selling seven or eight millions of bank stock. Mr. Polk had found some \$17,000,000 of debt, and had now run it up to one hundred millions of dollars on over! This was "Democratic" consistency! The people would mark it at the next election. Thomas Jefferson was opposed to a standing army, to a great navy; yet the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. McKay) had told the House that the appropriations for the naval service had run up within a few years from \$3,000,000 to \$11,000,000! And this under this beautiful Jeffersonian Administration, which went by the rule of contrary, looking one way, and rowing the other.

He always thought Mr. Jefferson was the friend of peace. What was Gen. Cass! For war, war, war! First with England; he was for "fifty-four furlongs or fight;" then he was for Mexico, for swallowing (to use his own language) the whole of Mexico; next for Yucatan; and then he might be for Canada. Now, here was the practice of the gentlemen over the way, and of their leader, who talked so loudly about Mr. Jefferson's principles! War was a barbarism in this enlightened age and country, it was an absurdity, a crime, and it was considered so by Gen. Taylor.

But a little more of the history of Gen. Cass. He had been on all sides of all questions. There was not a question of public policy of the country upon which Gen. Cass had not occupied a position on both sides. Once a Federalist, now a "Democrat;" when the question of the annexation of Texas first came up he was decidedly opposed to it; when it was said that the British were going to take Texas, "let them have it," said he, "we do not want it." But a little before the nomination on the 10th of May, 1844, he wrote a letter to Mr. Hannegan, in which he was for immediate annexation and for slavery too. He was against annexation and for annexation; against the proviso and for the proviso; against protection and for protection; against internal improvements and for internal improvements. With reference to the Wilmot proviso Gen. Cass was decidedly for it at first; he was a great proviso man; and then at the next session of Congress, when he found it would not do for a certain section, he turned against the proviso, and in his letter to Mr. Nicholson said "a change has been going on in my mind;" and when the slaveholders demanded to be allowed to carry their slaves to new territory, he says it would greatly improve the comfort and condition of the slaves if they were scattered over more territory, and he was now a great slavery man; and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. Featherston) had just said he was pledged to veto the Wilmot proviso. He was once for a protective tariff, but now opposed to all protection. The time was when Gen. Cass voted for internal improvements; but he wrote an answer to a letter of invitation to attend the Chicago Convention

in his neighborhood—a letter of four lines, stating that he could not attend; and at Cleveland the other day, when asked for his opinions on internal improvements and the proviso, he said there was such a crowd he was afraid he could not be heard; and therefore he spoke on other subjects! Now, the Baltimore Convention declared that internal improvements were unconstitutional, and Gen. Cass said, Amen; he agreed to every word in that platform. He was a man who had been on all sides of all questions; a man of no principle, no consistency, but a time-serving, vacillating, weather-cock candidate, and that had secured his nomination for the Presidency. But he (Mr. S.) thought his party now felt very much as Father Ritchie did—very much like giving it up.—Had the Whig candidate ever vacillated, ever changed his position, his principles! No. They were laid down in the Allison letter, and were fixed as the everlasting hills, having their foundation in justice and truth—based on the constitution of the country, and upon popular rights—the emanation of a sound head and a pure heart; it was impossible that they could be wrong, or could change.

Gen. Cass was once a great lover of volunteers. He was a volunteer himself, and was sometimes called the "old volunteer." But now—it was on the records of Congress, and there was no escape from it—he put it to gentlemen on the other side of the House, that at this session of Congress, on December 29th, in the Senate of the United States, Gen. Cass introduced a bill reducing the pay of the volunteers for commutation for their clothing one third.

Mr. Wick interposed; but Mr. Stewart declined to yield the floor, as his hour was fast running away. He would show gentlemen the bill; here it was, as it appeared on the records of the Senate:

"In the Senate of the United States,  
December 29, 1847.

Mr. Cass, from the Committee on Military Affairs, reported the following bill, which was read and passed to a second reading.

"A Bill to provide clothing for volunteers in the service of the United States.

"Be it enacted, &c.—That in lieu of the money which, under existing laws, is allowed to volunteers as a commutation for clothing, the President be and he is hereby authorized to cause the volunteers to be furnished with clothing in kind, at the same rates, according to grades, as is provided for the troops of the regular army."

The bill provided "that in lieu of the money" "clothing in kind" be furnished to the volunteers at the same rates according to grade as was provided for the regular army. Now here was a letter which he had received from the Adjutant General, stating what the allowance to the regulars was:

"ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
Washington, June 16, 1848.

Sir—In reply to your enquiry of the 15th instant, I respectfully inform you that the average allowance of clothing per month to the soldiers of the regular army is about \$ 2.35. I enclose herewith a copy of "General Order No. 10," current series, in which you will find specified the articles of clothing, and their value for each year of the term of enlistment. Respectfully,

R. JONES, Adj. Gen.

To the Hon. A. S. STEWART,  
House of Representatives, Washington."

This \$2.35 was "all grades, dragoons, artillerymen, &c.;" but by examination of the "general orders" referred to by the Adjutant General, he found that the whole amount of clothing for infantry for five years was \$114,55 1-2, which by computation, it would be seen, gave \$1.91 per month to the infantry, and no more. Thus it appeared that this bill of Gen. Cass reduced the allowance to infantry volunteers for clothing from \$3.50, allowed by the act of 1846, to \$1.91, the amount allowed to the infantry of the regular army. The "Union," it was true, and Mr. Cameron, said the volunteers could have their option; but the language of the bill was express; nobody could mistake it; it was that this "clothing in kind" should be furnished "in lieu of the money which under existing laws is allowed." Now, could you find any option there! The bill provided that clothing, which cost \$1.91 per month, should be furnished in lieu of the \$3.50 allowed under previous laws.

Mr. McClelland interposed, and was understood to speak of the construction put upon the law by the Adjutant General; but what he said was not caught by the Reporter.

Mr. Stewart declined to yield, and said he cared not what construction the Adjutant General had been induced to give to the law by Gen. Cass or anybody else; there was the law as it was reported by Gen. Cass, and as it passed. He knew it was said that Gen. Cass had seen the Adjutant General and got him or the President to nullify by construction, or veto it *ex post facto*; he might have found it would not do to strip the volunteers of their clothing; hanging and burning in effigy might have been unpleasant; and the Adjutant General might have been induced to construe this law of General Cass directly contrary to its provisions; still there was the law as introduced by General Cass and passed, which expressly provided for this change, and that \$1.91 "clothing in kind" should be furnished "in lieu" of the amount previously allowed, which was \$3.50. If it was intended to give them their election, as is now pretended, why did not Gen. Cass say so in his bill; why not say that the volunteers should be allowed to draw \$1.91, the amount of clothing allowed to regulars, which should be deducted out of the \$3.50 to which they were entitled, and not as the law declares "in lieu" of the 3.50. The \$1.91 was not to be in part, but in full. The law was too plain. Ingenuity could not mystify it. It was not only outrageously unjust, but it was clearly unconstitutional and void. What right had Gen. Cass to report and pass a law "impairing the obligation of contracts!" The Government had contracted to pay the volunteers \$8 per month and \$3.50 for clothing; the volunteers had agreed to take it, and had gone to Mexico. What right, then,